DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 013 FL 015 875

AUTHOR Brownstein, Leonard A.
TITLE Planning and Implementation of an M.A. Program in Spanish for Business, Public Education, Social Work, Law, and Medicine.
PUB DATE May 85
NOTE 14p.; In: Proceedings of the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions (4th, Dearborn, MI, May 2-4, 1985); see FL 015 835.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Administration; *Cross Cultural Training; English (Second Language); Higher Education; Industry; Intensive Language Courses; Intercultural Communication; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Languages for Special Purposes; *Masters Programs; Medicine; Part Time Students; *Professional Occupations; Program Development; Program Implementation; Public Service Occupations; Religious Cultural Groups; Second Language Instruction; Social Workers; *Spanish
IDENTIFIERS La Salle University PA

ABSTRACT

La Salle University (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) developed a three-track M.A. program in Spanish and bilingual studies which offers intensive training in Spanish and English and cross-cultural, interdisciplinary courses dealing with facets of Hispanic culture and Hispanics' adjustment problems in the United States. Track I is for bilingual teachers or teachers of English to speakers of other languages, teachers of Spanish as a first language, and other educators, counselors, and administrators. Track II is for professionals needing Spanish language training and increased bicultural understanding to function more effectively in the Hispanic community: business people, police personnel, social workers, nurses, utility company employees, industrial writers, and members of religious communities. Track III is for educators and urban professionals with a bachelor's degree who wish to develop language and/or cultural proficiencies without undertaking a second degree program. The program is for part-time students and is structured to provide a five-week immersion seminar in Spanish and development of specialized professional skills while working with peers in the Hispanic community. Language instruction in Caribbean Spanish and English for Hispanics and training in cross- cultural communication are also provided. Financial support is both public and private. Problems encountered include student costs, scheduling counseling and other services for part-time students, and faculty and administrator attitudes. (MSE)

ED272013

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN M.A. PROGRAM IN SPANISH FOR BUSINESS, PUBLIC EDUCATION, SOCIAL WORK, LAW, AND MEDICINE

By

Dr. Leonard A. Brownstein, Ph.D.

Director of M.A. in Bilingual/Bicultural Studies

La Salle University

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Voght

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL 015875

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN M.A. PROGRAM IN SPANISH FOR BUSINESS, PUBLIC EDUCATION, SOCIAL WORK, LAW, AND MEDICINE

Leonard A. Brownstein, Ph.D.
La Salle University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In early September of 1982, after more than three years of detailed market studies, research, and planning, La Salle University, a private, Catholic institution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, launched a vocationally oriented Master's Degree in Bilingual/Bicultural Studies (Spanish) which is characterized by a design model very different from that of the traditional programs in Bilingual Education. The purpose of this paper is to share with you the rationale of our new Program, a description of the basic structure and contents of its curriculum, and our problems in planning and implementing the program.

According to the 1980 Census there are more than 86,000 Hispanics living in Philadelphia and its environs. 46.5% are from Puerto Rico, 13.5% from Mexico, 7% from Cuba, and 33% were classified as "other Spanish". For the past several years, in order to meet the educational needs of the Hispanic child and other ethnic groups whose first language is not English, Philadelphia schools, both public and private, have developed various models of bilingual programs. The main thrust of these

programs is to help the minority child, especially the Hispanic, become bilingual. The Puerto Rican youngster, who is, after all, an American citizen, is expected to learn to understand, speak, read, and write in English, become culturally attuned to mainland America, and hopefully ought not lose his or her skills in Spanish or pride in his/her cultural heritage. It is obvious that Hispanics and other non-English speakers are required to become bilingual and bicultural while English speakers in the United States remain monolingual and monocultural. Should not bilingual education work in both directions? There appears to me to be an inequity here.

As a professor of Spanish, a long time supervisor of foreign language teachers and ESOL teachers, and a teacher of English in Spain, I have been struck, especially in recent years, by the irony and danger of our present situation. The role and importance of foreign languages at all levels--elementary, secondary, and university--have become increasingly diminished. At a time when Paul Simon's tongue-tied American is ubiquitous, our efforts in bilingual education and bicultural training appear in the main to be limited to remedial education for our ethnic minorities. Are our secondary schools and universities teaching our Anglo students true communicative skills in a foreign language, especially Spanish? Do the teachers themselves receive the necessary training to teach these skills? And if they do, what kind of language do they teach? In our bilingual schools, are the Hispanic teachers sufficiently trained to speak and write correctly in English? Do

the teachers of ESOL represent a truly positive role model? Are these teachers bilingual and bicultural individualswho have grappled with the psychological and intellectual processes of learning another language, and have they been exposed to another culture where they were no longer members of the "in" society? I am afraid that in the majority of cases the answers to these questions is a resounding "no."

The field of education, however, is not the only one in need of professionals with bilingual/bicultural skills. Many of our city's urban professionals need to communicate in Spanish with the large Hispanic population and also become increasingly aware of the cultural background of Hispanics and of the desperate economic and social predicament of many of these people, especially in these difficult years of the '80s.

In order to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of so many diverse professionals who deal directly with the Hispanic community, we at La Salle University have developed a three track Master's Program in Spanish and Bilingual Studies.

Track I is intended for teachers of English to speakers of other languages and/or of bilingual education, for teachers of Spanish as a first or second language as well as for all other educators, such as guidance counsellors, administrators, and special education teachers.

Track II is intended for professionals who need Spanish language training and increased bicultural understanding to function more effectively in the Hispanic community

(businessmen, policemen, social workers, nurses, employees of utility companies, writers in industrial plants, and members of religious communities).

Track III is intended for educators and urban professionals who possess at least a bachelor's degree, wish to develop language and/or cultural proficiencies, yet do not wish to pursue a second degree program.

Each track in the Program offers intensive training in Spanish and English and courses of an interdisciplinary nature in history, art and music, literature, sociology, and education. These courses, taught by members of several of our departments within the University, deal with the multi-faceted nature and problems of Hispanics, their cultural roots, and their problems in adjusting to the mainland way of life. With the exception of one professor, all of these instructors are bilingual in Spanish and English.

Since our Program is a part-time one, and a student may matriculate in no more than two courses each semester, completion of the thirty credit hour minimum requires two full academic years. Between the first and second year of the Program there is a 5 week evening immersion seminar which consists of 3 segments of study. The first segment is a 1 and 1/2 hour intensive language program in Spanish. The second segment consists of a series of workshops in which all candidates share the expertise of key members of our Hispanic community to develop specialized skills and training specifically needed for their profession.

Our urban professionals, therefore, work with leaders of social, political, and urban agencies that deal with the day to day problems of our Hispanic population trying to survive in our large problem-ridden barrios. Each Wednesday during this 5 week immersion program, our students do not attend classes on campus. Instead, they participate in a practical field experience, working directly either in a bilingual school, social agency, police precinct, or a local hospital. They are required to maintain detailed logs in which they relate the theoretical material learned in their course work to the realities of the Hispanic's plight in an urban setting. Drug and alcohol abuse, problems of health and nutrition, the complicated role of the Hispanic woman, welfare dependency, and adult illiteracy are the themes of these workshops. A vocationally oriented program such as ours, taught in a university setting, needs the expertise of Hispanic professionals who work in the community and serve as positive role models; otherwise the curriculum would remain remote and out of touch with the needs of Hispanics.

Both the immersion program and the curriculum of the regular academic year include courses in the Spanish language. This component of our program is probably the most innovative, and I might add, the most controversial. These courses are taught by qualified Caribbean teachers who are assisted by Hispanic students from the very program. Our Hispanic students, who receive stipends from the University, have proven to be an invaluable aid in individualizing instruction in these courses.

Having pretested our Track I students, we have discovered that their ability to understand native Caribbean speakers is poor, even though most of out students in Track I have undergraduate degrees in Spanish and have been teaching for at least one year. We feel very strongly that teachers in Track I and urban professionals in Track II must be able to understand and communicate with our particular Hispanic community. For Philadelphia, this means learning the idioms, intonation, and pronunciation characteristics of Caribbean Spanish. No students may graduate from the Program without attaining a stipulated level of competency in this important linguistic area.

With few exceptions out Hispanic students do not need these intensive language training courses in Caribbean Spanish. What they do need, however, is more training in their use of the English language. The course, therefore, English for Hispanics, is designed to offer these students advanced training in writing and speaking in English.

In addition to this constellation of language courses, our Program includes several interdisciplinary ones related to cross-cultural communication, to the comparative historical background of Hispanics and North Americans with an emphasis on Puerto Rican history, to the literature of the Caribbean, and to the sociological history of minority groups in the United States. These are our "core" courses since they are required of all students in the Program. In these classes, there is a stimulating and an invaluable mix between the educators of Track

I and the other urban professionals of Track II. The professors of these courses inform me that a tremendous amount of interaction develops between and among the students, and that ideas and concepts generated in the classes are thought through, questioned and argued in a very open and constructive manner. In addition, the mix between Hispanics and Anglos in these core courses creates a very positive atmosphere for true cross-cultural communication.

One of the objectives, for example, in the cross-cultural communication course, as stated by its professor, is: "to reduce any counterproductive stereotypes and prejudices which students may have toward people of other cultures." In this class, the students have been Hispanics from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Guatemala, a nun from Madrid, an Anglo priest who is coordinator of a Spanish apostolate near Philadelphia, a Cuban field inspector for the city's police department, an ESOL teacher in one of our local prisons, and a writer for the Philadelphia Electric Company. The important point here is that the professor of the class found ample opportunity to analyze and discuss with the students, sometimes heatedly, cultural stereotypes and cultural differences,includingthoseinthe area of non-verbal behavior.

These bicultural courses as well as the language courses are evaluated by traditional graduate school techniques: mid-terms, final examinations, and papers. The capstone experience of the Program, however, is less traditional. Instead of writing a theoretical research paper or taking a

series of comprehensive examinations our students are required to develop a practical project which directly relates to their present or future profession. For example, a nurse who works with Hispanics in an important health center in Philadelphia has written a bilingual manual which deals with health care in pregnancy and child bearing. A Spanish teacher in a secondary school has created a series of cultural assimilators which she actually utilized with her own classes. Finally, one of our May '85 graduates is completing a study of the technical vocabulary in Spanish needed by the Electric Company to address the needs of its Hispanic consumers. At the end of the first year of the Program, each student chooses a particular faculty member to guide him or her in the writing of these projects. One important Puerto Rican agency and an ethnic museum in Philadelphia have already requested copies of these projects for their archives.

In the early planning stages of this vocationally oriented program, my colleagues and I became acutely aware of the importance of forming an advisory committee that would not only include school administrators and faculty, but also key members of our highly pluralistic urban community: an Hispanic administrator of an important social agency, a representative of a large Philadelphia business corporation, a member of the Police Department, the Director of the Philadelphia Bilingual, ESOL, and Foreign Language Department, a member of the Philadelphia Spanish Apostolate, and finally a psychologist in

an important children's hospital located within our principal Hispanic barrio--all these people helped give structure and relevance to our Program. They remain actively interested in our progress and are our best sources for recruitment of students.

Also, from the very beginning stages in planning for this Program, we received financial support from both public and private agencies. Our own State Offices of Foreign Languages and Bilingual Education in Harrisburg awarded us three technical assistance grants to help defray the cost involved in writing our original proposal and conducting several market studies. The Tinker Foundation of New York City, particularly interested in the innovative nature of our language courses, made a generous award to us for the writing of syllabi, for advertising the Program, and for increasing our library acquisitions. The Samuel Fels Foundation of Philadelphia provided us with funds to purchase a variety of state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and teaching aids: a video cassette recorder together with a camera, a good supply of video cassettes, cassette tape recorders, a short wave radio, and a sophisticated Caramette slide projector. All of this equipment is being utilized in both the language and bicultural classes. We are also the grateful recipients of a three year continuing training grant under Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act. This generous grant helps defray the cost of faculty salaries and provides additional funds for library acquisitions, and advertising.

Finally, the University itself provides a limited amount of scholarship money to assist qualified and needy students. We generally apply scholarship money to the tuition of the rather costly nine-credit Spring Immersion Program.

The financial cost to the prospective student for such a program is only one of the many problems that we are encountering. Counselling and advising part-time students who are employed during the day and whose free time is very limited is another difficult and sometimes vexing problem. Our most important concern, however, is and has been how to deal with faculty and administrative reluctance to accept a vocationally oriented graduate program. All of our faculty and administrators are products of very traditional research-oriented Ph.D. programs which emphasize theoretical approaches to learning and the extensive use of the library in the development of a documented thesis. Our new Master's Program, however, must reach out beyond the walls of the University and the traditional modes of teaching and learning. An awareness of the stark reality of the ever-present problems of ethnic minorities, a knowledge of community resources, the ability to address the financial needs of a desperately poor society, the development of sensitivity to linguistic and cultural differences, and the ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally with Hispanics--these competencies are not taught by professors who distribute long bibliographies at the beginning of a graduate course and then require students to prepare

equally long research papers at the end. Such activities may be entirely viable for other types of graduate curricula. It is my opinion, however, that such traditional approaches doom vocationally oriented graduate programs. Learning another language for communication purposes, especially a brand of Spanish as difficult as Caribbean Spanish, is in itself a challenging and respectable task; in many ways, as most of us realize, it can be as challenging a task as the study of literature, which has been the traditional focus of graduate courses in our field.

Our new Program is obviously an effort to bring together the worlds of foreign language instruction and bilingual / bicultural studies. I was recently heartened by reading Alvin Eurich's article, "A New Direction for Bilingual Education in the 1980s", which appeared in ADFL. Eurich states:

> A new wind is blowing...The United States public is beginning to accept the ideas of "minimum competencies" and "basic education" expected of all those growing up in the society. Language competence, including proficiency in at least one language in addition to English, could become part of the constellation of basic skills more generally expected of students. The participation of all kinds of students in bilingual education programs is a way for the worlds of foreign language instruction, bilingual education, and education for international understanding to come

together as part of a general improvement in United States education.[1]

To accomplish this admirable goal, we need to begin to train our teachers and urban professionals to become themselves bilingual and bicultural. This is the basic premise of our entire design model. We think it is working.

Notes

[1] Alvin C. Eurich, "A New Direction for Bilingual Education in the 1980's," ADFL Bulletin 14 (1982): 6.